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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the recurring behavior patterns exhibited by first-year schools in the Louisiana Accelerated Schools Network during the evaluation process conducted during the years 1992 and 1993. These patterns are viewed through the lens of one of the three guiding principles of the accelerated schools process--empowerment coupled with responsibility. The paper develops a holistic portrait that shows how school communities build the capacity for educational change. It focuses on how teachers and school administrators in six schools came to understand the meaning of empowerment, and provides information about the feelings and experiences of principals and teachers in their struggles and successes to change from a traditional learning environment to an accelerated one. Data were obtained from onsite observations and interviews conducted with 28 teachers and 6 principals in the 6 participating schools. The schools demonstrated several similar behavior patterns: (1) many teachers and administrators were initially ambivalent toward empowerment; (2) principals found that they had to change their leadership styles; (3) teachers experimented with finding ways to empower students; and (4) principals needed support from other principals in the network to change their leadership styles. Appendices contain the interview guide and patterns of behavior from the 1992 and 1993 evaluation reports. Contains 13 references. (LMI)

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Building capacity for Educational Change: A Portrait of Behavioral Patterns of First Year Schools in the Louisiana Accelerated Schools Network

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the recurring behavioral patterns exhibited during the "taking-stock process" by first-year schools in the Louisiana Accelerated Schools Network between the years 1991 and 1993. These patterns are viewed through the lens of one of the three guiding principles of the accelerated schools process--empowerment coupled with responsibility. Focusing on these patterns contributes to a holistic portrait (Eisner, 1991) of how school communities build the capacity for educational change. This portrait, while conveying vivid descriptions of schools in the initial phase of an educational metamorphosis, provides information about the feelings and experiences of principals and teachers in their struggles and successes to change from a traditional learning environment to an accelerated one.

The format of this paper, includes the introduction, theoretical framework, methodology and data source, findings, conclusions, and educational implications of the study. The rationale for the selection of the format is an appropriate avenue for discussing and sharing the findings of this study.

Building Capacity for Educational Change: A Portrait of Behavioral Patterns of First-Year Schools in the Louisiana Accelerated Schools Network

Introduction

The accelerated schools process provides a systematic approach to the restructuring of schools that serve predominately at-risk students. Developed in 1986 by Henry M. Levin, Professor of Economics and Education at Stanford University, this strategy seeks to close the achievement gap for educationally disadvantaged elementary school students such that by the end of the elementary grades, they realize appropriate age/grade performance. The success of this project is closely linked to meaningful high levels of parent involvement, school-based management, innovative uses of community resources, and the development of a reliable mechanism of cooperative decision making. Implementation of the accelerated schools process requires that schools develop clearly delineated goals that are understood and agreed upon by parents, students, administrators, and teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The dreams of transforming a traditional school into an accelerated school can come true through the dedication, commitment and hard work of the whole school community--parents, teachers, students, administrators, staff, and community. The journey in the process of this transformation is exciting because of the powerful ideas generated by the school community. However, in the quest for educational change, attention must be

given to building the capacity for embracing the three guiding principles of the accelerated schools.

These three principles stated by Levin (1992a) are:

1) A unity of purpose for the school that is shared by all staff, parents, students, and the local community;
2) The responsibility by staff, parents, students, and the community for educational decisions and their consequences; and
3) The building on strengths of students, staff, parents, and community members through the use of a gifted and talented pedagogy. (p. 2)

A long-term view must be taken to create ideas and a wide range of activities to internalize the three principles. The key to developing the capacity for school-site change involves not only embracing the three principles, but implementing them at an "in-use" level. Explanation of these concepts are based on theories of action (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). There are two theories of action. The espoused theory refers to what the individual claims he or she believes and what he or she would do in certain circumstances and situations. The theory-in-use refers to those actions actually taken in those situations. St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, and Meza (1992) indicate:

> Based on our experience with observations of and research on the implementation of the accelerated schools process, we have concluded that these

principles need to be experienced at the "in-use level," for the accelerated schools process to take hold in a school (p. 64).

This paper examines the evidence that first year schools have not only "espoused" the three principles but have begun to implement and practice them at the "in-use" level. It focuses specifically on how teachers and school administrators in six schools came to understand the meaning of one of the three guiding principles--empowerment coupled with responsibility. The organization of the paper includes the introduction, theoretical framework, methodology and data source, findings, conclusions, and educational implications of the study. The methodology and data source section includes a description and discussion of the research methods. The data is structured thematically. These themes emerged after the investigation was completed and provide a guide for understanding the recurring messages from observations and interviews. The conclusion summarizes the data thematically to give a holistic view of patterns that are evolving in first year accelerated schools from 1992 and 1993.

Methodology and Data Source

The methodology for this paper on capacity building-focusing on empowerment coupled with responsibility--included interviews and observations from six first-year schools both rural and urban across the state of Louisiana. The interviews and observations were conducted during site visitations by project teams from the University of New Orleans (UNO). The 28 teachers and six

principals interviewed consisted of both those who had and had not attended the summer training in Lafayette, Louisiana, in July of 1992. The interviews focused on the "taking-stock" process. It is during this phase of the accelerated schools project that everyone in the school community works together to explore all facets of the school to provide a comprehensive portrait of the school while moving toward a unified vision. All three principles are incorporated during the "taking-stock" process.

This paper is intended to document the foundation that is being built and not as a judgmental evaluation of individual schools, teachers, or principals. As a consequence names are not identified. The teachers interviewed were somewhat anxious at the onset of the questioning. Some seemed to think they had to give the "right" answer. While others said they did not respond well on the spot without preparation. once the interviews started, however, teachers spoke openly, honestly, and sincerely. It was a beneficial opportunity for them to express their concerns, anxieties, as well as excitement about what is happening in their schools because of the accelerated schools process.

Analytic Perspective

The intent of this paper on capacity building is to provide a portrait of six schools at the beginning level of a metamorphosis: The metamorphosis being the initiation of an educational transformation. The portrait while conveying vivid descriptions of people will provide information about the feelings and experiences of teachers, students, parents, and community in their

struggles and successes to change the traditional learning environment to an accelerated one. This paper will act as a guide to further the progress of the efforts of a school in the transition to become an accelerated school and the enhancement of the education of children. Eisner (1991) believes artistic forms such as the concept of the portrait in qualitative research can provide new understandings and insights into the educational setting. The portrait presented here will provide a frame, focusing on empowerment coupled with responsibility, for viewing the schools building the capacity for transition in the transformation of their schools. These themes emerged from the seventeen questions about "taking-stock" in the accelerated schools process (see Appendix A for research questions). Within each theme, patterns become visible from the majority of interviewees. Evidence of patterns of involvement, collaboration, participation, reflection, trust, understanding weaved together forming the basis for healing divisions. Within the theme of empowerment with responsibility emerged patterns of roles, leadership, and commitment.

According to Eisner (1991) the concept of the portrait in qualitative research can provide new understandings and insights into the educational setting. Through Eisner's methodology of qualitative research as inquiry, researchers learn that they become connoisseurs to see the total picture of what is transpiring in the school and classroom to understand, interpret, and describe thoughts, events, and feelings. Eisner's five

dimensions of schooling were considered instrumental as a guide in the methodology of this paper:

1. The Intentional Dimension--goals or aims of the school members (Are they just espoused or really put into practice?).
2. The Structural Dimension--organizational forms of school (time blocks, scheduling, grading, etc.).
3. The Curricular Dimension--curriculum content and goals, activities, interdisciplinary approaches, individualized learning, cooperative learning and values of curriculum.
4. The Pedagogical Dimension--diversified teaching and learning styles (moving away from standardization to creativity).
5. The Evaluative Dimension--designing approaches and aims to evaluation consistent with school settings that create success and not failure for students.

These five dimensions helped to create the portrait that provided a frame for viewing how teachers and principals built the capacity for the transformation of their schools.

Empowerment with Responsibility

Throughout the research, there was abundant evidence that teachers, principals, parents, students, and administrators need to be empowered in order to become involved in decisions that affect them. St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, and Meza (1992) states that, "Accelerated Schools are schools that have transitioned out of the conventional mode of educational delivery,

the factory model of education, to a new approach that emphasizes empowerment of students, teachers, and administrators" (P. 9).

Throughout the research, there was abundant data that teachers, principals, parents, students, and administrators need to be empowered in order to become involved in decisions that affect them. The theme of empowerment became especially obvious with questions regarding roles of the members of the school community. It became apparent that if empowerment with responsibility was to become a reality and not just an espoused theory then the capacity must be built for effective teacher empowerment as well as empowerment of the school-as-a-whole.

Building the capacity for empowerment must be a process in which the school and district understand their responsibilities and facilitate leadership. Levin (1991) argues that there needs to be a clear establishment of roles and responsibilities in conjunction with decision-making. Based on data collected from this research, the patterns of responsibility, leadership roles, and the ability to test these roles become apparent. The following section will document that the concept of building capacity for empowerment of first year accelerated schools was gradually evolving as the school community made personal commitments to take risks to become change agents. If educational change is to occur then Levin (1991) argues there must be "... a recognition of where the ultimate responsibility lies for making the necessary changes" (p. 1). Educational decisions must be the responsibility of teachers and the school

staff and parents in conjunction with the support of the central offices of districts and states.

Findings

Ambivalence Towards Empowerment

Data from all the schools found that at the time of the interviews there were some teachers who were not yet willing to take on the responsibilities for educational change. Reasons indicated were, first, some teachers were not sure what work empowerment held for them. Some felt they were already overwhelmed with classroom problems. Second, a few teachers were afraid of leadership roles. A veteran teacher of 25 years commented that some teachers do not feel comfortable taking on leadership roles because of their personalities. She went on to say that leadership is thrust upon her many times but she is comfortable helping people there. As she stated:

> I find that, I am always willing to help and sometimes I am a little bit leery that maybe someone won't help me as much as I help them .... No, I don't like leadership roles, but like I said most of the time I am a leader.

Third, many of the teachers felt that even though they may have wanted to make changes and decisions they needed more support and autonomy from the school level and district administration offices. A counselor who went to summer training remarked:

> Even when we [a cadre or committee] discussed empowerment, most of us, I don't think we feel that we have been empowered to do the kinds of things that we need to do.... I think we need to be empowered to do things and be trusted to do the things.

Fourth, some teachers want change but do not want to get involved in the process. A core teacher related that many times the same people always take on the responsibility in her school. Finally, the term empowerment is ambivalent causing confusion about roles to be played; this in turn results in tension at the school between teachers and principals. According to a counselor who is very involved in the accelerated schools project:

> When we first started off a few people just really got the wrong idea and the definition of the word empower. The few who you would call leaders of the school... felt that [the principal should] step in the back...this caused a little conflict.

Levin (1992b) looks at the ambivalence in teachers' approaches toward empowerment. He quotes Lortie (1975) to make the point that there are several reasons for the ambivalence.

> There is a certain ambivalence, then in the teacher's sentiments. He yearns for more independence, greater resources, and just possibly, more control over key resources. But, he accepts the hegemony of the school system on which he is economically and functionally dependent. He cannot ensure that the imperatives of

> teachings, as he defines them, will be honored, but he chafes when they are not. He is poised between the impulse to control his work life and the necessity to accept its vagaries; perhaps he holds back partly because he is at heart uncertain that he can produce predictable results. (p. 186)

A few first year accelerated schools teachers in each school have experienced ambivalence; however, there is evidence that the majority are providing linkages for accepting new roles and responsibilities through a process of airing out and discussing feelings, interests, issues and concerns. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) call this type of communication an "unfreezing process." They argue that the "unfreezing process" is necessary as a prerequisite for internalizing commitments and relating to each other, making free and informed choices, taking responsibility by attempting to test their new actions. As teachers begin to question the term empowerment and its application they are taking a first very positive and crucial step in changing their lenses from hierarchial rigid traditional organizational structure in education to what Bennis (1989) would call more fluid structures.

Testing Waters for New Behaviors and New Roles

Many teachers and principals described approaches they used to test waters to see if they could enact new behaviors. Much of the initial testing was based on reflection, risk-taking, and open

dialogue with their colleagues and principals. A third grade teacher reflecting on changing roles of the school members said:

> We can always say how it needs to be, but if we don't get involved....right now we are trying [to get involved]. We really got to know what each other was thinking. There was a little point when morale was very low. But then it was because we had never really got this deep into looking at ourselves, each other, the school, and the total picture. I think we are crossing over that mountain, now that we got together and did a beautiful job. We have a lot of cooperation. We came across some that didn't really know that this much work was involved. Sometimes we say what we want others to hear, we don't say what we really feel. You must not be afraid to get to the point.

The majority of the teachers indicated that they were taking-risks now to express ideas, and concerns as well as trying new teaching techniques. A classroom teacher of 17 years expressed herself by saying:

> Some of them are afraid of making mistakes. There is a certain amount of fear in certain teachers. They are so use to doing things one way that the change they just feel comfortable in doing it a certain way. We do see where teachers are making some changes, not all of us.

All the principals interviewed indicated strongly that they were trying to be less an authority figure and more of a facilitator in the new endeavors of the project. The majority of teachers had observed that principals were becoming more responsive to their ideas, innovations, and problems. A third grade teacher of four years realized this change in her principal because the principal frequently asks for their opinions and gives them the opportunities to make decisions. The teacher, interestingly enough, was also realizing that getting decision the making power can lead to difficulties for the faculty. As she expressed:

> Now she [the principal] gives us a lot of leeway and everything is "What do you think?"....Sometimes we are in chaos--this one wants to do this and this one wants to do that. We have to work this out. But she is giving us the responsibility.

The testing of new behaviors and roles meant at a minimum making a personal commitment to try out new roles to see if they work. This in itself was a sign that transformation had begun in the schools.

Creating School Environments Through Roles of Responsibility

St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, and Meza (1992) found that the first year accelerated schools were developing an environment that fosters personal commitments by the testing process. The same pattern has been observed by the UNO team this year. Observations of exciting, creative and innovative projects are the

evidence that teachers are getting the opportunity to make decisions and use their roles to create new learning environments. Several examples are described below.

In a rural school in Southeast Louisiana, the principal and teachers were working together to embrace non-traditional teaching methods as a means of getting students to not only learn about their Cajun culture, but have fun too. The principal was clearly taking the role of facilitator by supporting the teachers. She was helping to provide the time, scheduling, and flexibility to help second grade teachers initiate interdisciplinary projects. The teachers, working as a team, were assuming the roles of not just traditional teachers, but artists, chefs, choreographers, and storytellers to culminate a thematic unit on their own cajun environment. Each child went to the red checked covered tables in front of one of the second grade classrooms to add ingredients for crawfish jambalaya. Another teacher was entertaining the curious children by telling a story of Clouis the Crawfish while Cajun music played in the background. Children then viewed a video of Cajun dancing as a preparation for their own lesson of dancing. At the end of the activity, all the second graders ate the jambalaya. The principal visited the children to share the fun. No doubt these children will not forget what it is to have a Cajun experience. The school environment for these children was becoming one of active participation.

While visiting a Northwestern rural school, interviewers observed an environment where art and the curriculum went hand-

in-hand as a "pod" decorating contest had just recently ended. A teacher who had attended a quarterly meeting had observed how meaningful hands-on activities seemed to enliven the school for learning. She went back to her school and took the role of coordinator for the whole school to participate in a contest to decorate the walls, halls, and classrooms with student and teacher work. Each grade level choose a theme. During the visit, the UNO team walked through "pods" that were caves of dinosaurs, waters, and cultures of Louisiana. Kites, insects, hearts, and flags hung from ceilings. Many other grade levels displayed their "pod" themes in unique manners. A fourth grade teacher from the school said that at one time students tore down decorations. But this time everything was still hanging because it was their work being displayed. They incorporated student stories, art work, sculptures, mobiles, and dioramas into their display.

Thus, there was observable evidence that teachers in first year schools were changing their roles. The majority of teachers interviewed had decided to remain in their schools for the next year, a positive sign in schools that historically had high teacher turnover. One exceptional case was a teacher who had already decided to leave the school and go to another school. After attending the third quarterly statewide network meeting that focused on the inquiry process, the teacher was so impressed that she decided not to transfer. She wanted to see these changes happen at her present school.

Parents are also making commitments to help their children's school. In every school, interviewees told story after story of how parents were taking a more active role. They were becoming involved because of the new attitudes the faculty and staff were taking toward them--one of recognition and appreciation. Also parents liked the opportunity to become involved in the exciting projects that were taking place.

Thus, there was evidence that personal commitments to new roles and responsibilities were being felt. These were schools with new, or changing, learning environments, increasingly geared toward student success.

Supporting Empowerment with New Leadership Styles

As accelerated schools move toward empowerment, administrators in district central offices and principals must make a transition from controls that stifle creative thinking, limit open dialogue about concerns, and place boundaries on innovative teaching to a more collaborative and mutual partnership in discourse and decision making. Levin (1991) suggests " ... that principals must make the transition from control and policy enforcement to inspiration facilitator coordinator and acceleration" (p. 22).

At least three-fourths of the teachers interviewed indicated that they were provided autonomy by their principal to freely dialogue, to take the role of risk-takers, and to make mistakes while becoming collaborative change agents. Half of the teachers had observed that district central office administrators were

supportive in the same respect. The allowance for mistakes as a path for growing and learning was an important step in empowerment for teachers. Central office administrators and principals as leaders should not perpetrate fear in making mistakes. Bennis (1989) purports that leaders making commitments for organizational change must have a healthy attitude toward risk taking and allow for mistakes.

Many teachers observed that in the accelerated schools process, making mistakes was beginning to be considered part of their creativity. A second grade teacher who had gone to training said, "I think we have been so geared to having everything written--state guidelines, state everything--everybody is a little bit afraid to make a mistake or to look silly or look unprofessional."

Leaders as Facilitators of Teacher Empowerment

Evidence from interviews and observations indicates that changing leadership styles of principals and central office administrators are beginning to facilitate empowerment in the schools. The new leadership style perceives teachers as professionals who can make decisions based on the needs of their students. One veteran teacher seemed relieved by the change of attitude when she reported, "I've always had the desire to want to teach a certain way and when my supervisors turned around, I did." She continued:

> I just feel freedom. It is like you have been given the validation now to do it. Whereas before you knew

> what you were doing was the right thing to do for children's needs because you are the professional in the classroom. But still you may have had these guidelines, standards saying you have to be on a certain page at a certain time. It is like they finally are saying they believe in what you are doing. They [principal and central office] have given us control to do the skills I should be teaching. I'm going to make sure that these children are well prepared for whatever it is they need to do. I'm with the children; I know what their needs are.

Hammond (1988) emphasizes a view that would support that teachers' feelings on professionalism when she observed:

> An alternative view which supports the professionalization of teaching starts from the assumption that students are not standardized and teaching is not routine...teaching techniques deemed effective will vary for students with different learning styles. (p. 5)

Despite the fact some teachers still felt oppressed by stringent demands for accountability and increased standardized test scores by principals and central offices, most school staffs are experiencing a relaxing and less threatening atmosphere in their schools.

Teachers can be more expressive and interactive in dialogue with their principals and administrators from central office than before the accelerated schools project. In one school district, the superintendent set up a committee for brainstorming and sharing teachers' concerns. Every month six representatives from schools were asked to come to the sessions. one representative teacher disclosed how much she felt the dialogue was important when she said:

> We are expressing ourselves to those "powers that be" about what we feel is adequate and not adequate to meet the needs of our students....Each month before the meeting the person who is going to represent the school would ask us to jot down all our little ideas, questions and concerns so they could present them to the superintendent.

Freire (1973) suggests that dialogue can play an important role as a starting point for organizing a program of education. Dialogue allows educators to look critically at what they are doing and become aware of their situations in order to make changes. Freire says, "It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours" (p. 85). Gitlin and Price (1993) view Freire's perspective as a crucial element in empowerment because it "...enables individuals and groups to more powerfully act on and change teaching and schooling" (p. 68).

The majority of teachers expressed that their principals were very willing to have them make suggestions especially concerning the curriculum and instructional processes. Each of the principals revealed that they were trying to be responsive to teachers' innovative projects for the school. A special education teacher from a school which at one time experienced many divisions was very "upbeat" in saying, "In regards to empowerment of teachers, she [the principal] has always let us speak our minds and come up with suggestions and she always uses them."

This teacher went on to explain that the teachers wanted to have a black history celebration. The principal was cooperative in letting the teachers plan the whole event. Teachers volunteered who had not previously been involved in many activities. The event brought teachers together. Another teacher from the same school was beginning to see teachers come together more because they are seeing the children happier with accelerated hands-on teaching and learning instead of being compelled to use the text all the time. The teacher of seventeen years said:

> Most of the curriculum at one point was handed to us. You have so many things that are handed down from the state department and from the parish... they want us to comply with those things. Teachers are beginning to feel a bit more comfortable using that empowerment, where they are beginning to know "yes" it is alright for me not to use the basal text for a while....I've always had the urge to teach children something they

would feel comfortable in learning or take what is in the text book and redo it to meet the needs of the children.

She went on to say that things are changing because teachers are able to try things. She ended by saying, "I'm beginning to hear some good comments and I see some nice things that are happening."

A principal from a school also commented that he was able to be more responsive to teachers because the central office had eased on some restrictions regarding the curriculum guide. As he stated:

> Since becoming involved in the accelerated schools process we have been able to some degree to get permission from the central office to utilize some flexibility for teachers to deviate from the parish implementation guide which advocates time lines. The principal expressed, however, that he and the staff are still not content because there needs to be more room for teachers to do their own unit plans.

Empowering Students to be Decision Makers

As the teachers were becoming more liberated they were enabled to be more creative in their teaching strategies. There is substantial evidence that three-fourths of the teachers are empowering students to become more interactive participants and decision makers in this learning process.

Students have become happier and are having more fun while learning. Consequently, teachers have found students' self-esteem

becoming more positive. A counselor has realized that students are becoming responsible. She said, "I realize in the [accelerated] process that academics and self-esteem are really intertwined." She indicated that the student has more responsibility and is able to make more decisions--able to claim whatever the outcome is.

Other signs of student empowerment have been visible in their involvement in the taking-stock process. Students were asked to complete surveys about their needs, concerns, and interests. The exciting aspect of empowerment is that the teachers and principals now are listening, responding, and interacting with students. Teachers and students are developing lesson plans and units. one third grade teacher said she has seen an improvement in the discipline because of the interaction of students and teachers in the classroom. She said, "It is not just write, write [in the classroom]; there is a lot of teacher-student interaction."

Observations of students' work in classrooms, school halls, walls, in the cafeteria indicated that students were becoming empowered. Their art work and writings portrayed that they were receiving the capacity to think and solve problems based on their individuality.

In conclusion, this evaluation of empowerment finds that principals of first year schools were attempting to negotiate with central office administrators to provide flexibility in scheduling and guidelines. This was conducive for teachers to be elevated to higher level of professionalism because they are now able to be

decision makers, especially in regards to curriculum and instructional processes. Students were encouraged to have input into what they think is important in the learning process.

The accelerated school model does seem to be providing the path for principals and central office administrators and teachers to work as transformational leaders by utilizing collaborative efforts to energize, focus, and empower the entire school community. The results from this empowerment create the scaffolding of a unified culture for successful learning experiences and forms the Maslow (1954) architecture of social norms which emphasizes self-actualization particularly for teachers and students. The ultimate corollary becomes the generation of opportunities of action.

CONCLUSIONS

Schools engaged in the taking stock process last year (1992) and this year (1993) were found to have many similar behavior patterns. These patterns emerged as a result of schools espousing and practicing at an "in-use" level the three principles of the accelerated schools project. A comparison and contrast of patterns focusing on empowerment with responsibility between 1992 and 1993 schools is described below (see Appendix B).

First, it was apparent that many teachers and administrators were initially ambivalent toward the concept of empowerment, a pattern that has been observed by others (e.g. Chenoweth & Kushman, 1993; St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, & Meza, 1992). By expressing and reflecting on their doubts, they developed a

deeper understanding of what the concept of empowerment meant to them. Last year (1992), the teachers and administrators interviewed did not express doubts in the concept, rather they had doubts about whether it could work at their schools and they immediately began to test whether their administrators were serious about the concept or were just espousing the principle (St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, & Meza, 1992). This testing behavior was also evident this year and may be an essential part of the personal learning process as has been suggested by advocates of reflective practice (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985).

Additionally, it was evident from interviews in first year schools last year that some individuals within the schools went through a period of introspection about the process, then made a deep personal commitment to the process. These individuals became leaders within their schools. These same expressions were not included in the interviews with the new set of schools, although there were behaviors that suggested teachers were making personal commitments to the process.

Second, changes in the approaches to leadership being used in the schools were evident both years. Last year, it was evident that the accelerated schools process essentially required that principals change their approaches to leadership. Some embraced this with enthusiasm, while others resisted. At the time, the research team felt these changes in leadership style were a key to the extent to which change would be evident in the second year of the project (St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, & Meza, 1992).

This year these same processes were evident. Indeed, all of the site-level administrators interviewed described a process of personal reflection and change. Both years, some teachers emerged as facilitators of empowerment--those who led the way by taking personal responsibility.

It was also observed this year that more teachers began to experiment openly with finding ways to empower students as decision makers. This level of personal action by teachers appears to be a good sign of their understanding of the concept of empowerment. These patterns are now evident in some of the schools that were in their second year at the time this set of first-year interviews were conducted, but were not as evident across schools to the site visit teams last year.

Finally, in this study the principals interviewed did not discuss the support they had received from other principals in the network as a source of strength in changing their leadership styles, as they had last year (St. John, Allen-Haynes, Davidson, & Meza, 1992). Last year, the UNO team had emphasized using reflective dialogues at quarterly statewide network meetings as a means of building an understanding of the process, a technique that was not used as much for first year schools this year. Rather, in the first year training of new schools, teachers and principals from second year schools shared their reflections with first year schools. From this initial analysis it appears that this new approach was at least as effective at promoting genuine learning of the meaning of the concept of empowerment with

responsibility. However, a strong rapport among the first year principals was not evident, as had been the case last year. Thus, there was a great deal of similarity, as well as some differences, in the ways teachers and administrators came to develop personal understanding of the meaning of the accelerated schools concept of empowerment coupled with responsibility.

Educational Implications of the Study

As teachers began to involve themselves in the process, they realized educational changes would occur only if the word empowerment became more than a tantalizing slogan. Several areas of concern regarding empowerment were noted by interviewees. First, the word empowerment was ambivalent. It became obvious that this confusion was a cause of tension. Teachers in some cases argued that empowerment meant principals were to surrender all authority. For principals the word was a threat to their leadership. But for most schools, shared decision making with responsibility was understood as another meaning for empowerment.

Second, testing the meaning of the word empowerment became important for many teachers. This meant that they wanted the autonomy to be risk takers, to be innovative and creative in developing new teaching strategies, curriculum programs, and policies in schools. Personal commitments to be responsible to implement these ideas were part of the testing in both years.

Third, school communities found that central office administrators and principals needed to be supportive and flexible if true empowerment is to occur. Traditional leadership styles

must give way to leaders who are willing to listen, respond, and interact with parents, students, and teachers.

However, changing leadership styles is not easy. The 1992 data documented that principals made efforts to network in order to be supportive of each other in the transition of leadership styles. The interviewees this year (1993) did not indicate this as occurring.

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Appendix A

Louisiana Accelerated Schools Project

Interview Guide for First Year Schools

Background

Name:

Position:

1. How long have you been employed at this school?

   Probes: Other positions here? Other positions in education?

2. What is your educational background?

   Probes: Degrees? Majors? Areas of certification?

3. Describe your involvement in the accelerated schools process.

   UNO Training. Taking stock process.

Observations about Taking Stock

Note: Based on the response to question 3, ask the following questions as appropriate.

4. Describe the methods you have used in the taking stock process.

   Probes: Brainstorming? Data collection? organization?

5. What have you learned about teachers?

   Probes: Backgrounds? Interests? Strengths? Weaknesses?

6. What have you learned about students' backgrounds?

7. What have you learned about the curriculum?

8. What have you learned about instructional processes?

9. What have you learned about student achievement?

10. What have you learned about student self-esteem? and discipline?

11. What have you learned about parents (backgrounds, needs, etc.)?

12. What have you learned about school organization? Probes: Role of principal? Role of teachers? Role of Parents? Role of the community? Role of central administration?

13. Other insights about the school gained in the taking stock process?

<u>Pulling It Together</u>

14. In your view, what are the major strengths of the school?

15. In your view, what are the major challenges facing the school?

16. Has your school developed a vision?

a. If yes, ask them to:

(1) State the vision in their own words.

(2) Describe the process used to develop the vision.

b. If no, ask them to describe their personal vision for the school.

17. What are your wishes and pluses relative to UNO's facilitation and training?

Appendix B

Patterns of Behavior from the

1992 and 1993 Evaluation Reports

Empowerment with Responsibility

1992	1993
A. Taking Personal Responsibility	A. Changing Roles of Responsibilities
1. Testing new behaviors--Getting serious about empowerment	1. Ambivalence towards empowerment
2. Making personal commitments	2. Testing waters for new behaviors and new roles
B. Change in Leadership Styles	B. Supporting Empowerment with New Leadership Styles
1. Facilitating empowerment	1. Leaders as facilitators of teacher empowerment.
2. Peer support	2. Not applicable here